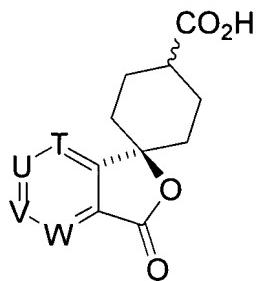


IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-7 (canceled)

8. (original) A process for preparing a compound of the formula IC, or a salt thereof,



IC ; wherein

T, U, V and W are each independently selected from the group consisting of

(1) nitrogen, and

(2) methine,

wherein the methine group is unsubstituted or optionally substituted with a substituent selected from the group consisting of

(a) halogen,

(b) lower alkyl,

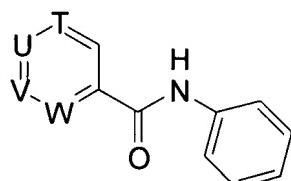
(c) hydroxy, and

(d) lower alkoxy, and

wherein at least two of T, U, V, and W are methine;

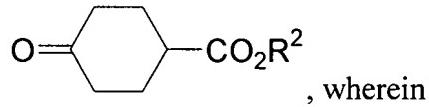
comprising the steps of

(a) combining a strong base with a compound of formula A



in an aprotic solvent to form a solution;

- (b) reacting a compound of formula B



B

R<sup>2</sup> is selected from the group consisting of:

- (a) lower alkyl, and  
(b) -CH<sub>2</sub>-phenyl, wherein the phenyl group is unsubstituted or substituted with a substituent selected from the group consisting of  
(1) lower alkyl,  
(2) lower alkoxy, and  
(3) -NO<sub>2</sub>,

with the solution of step (a) to form a solution;

- (c) reacting the solution of step (b) with water to form a solution; and  
(d) adjusting the pH of the solution of step (c) to between about 0 and 4 with an acid to afford the compound IC, or a salt thereof.

9. (original) The process of Claim 8 further comprising the step (e) of isolating the compound of formula IC, or a salt thereof.

10. (canceled)

11. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein the aprotic solvent of step (a) is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, toluene, heptane, dimethoxyethane, benzene, and hexane, diethyl ether, xylene, or a mixture thereof.

12. (canceled)

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13. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein the strong base of step (a) is selected from the group consisting of n-BuLi, sec-BuLi, t-BuLi, LiHMDS, NaHMDS, KHMDS and LiTMP.

14. (canceled)

15. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein step (a) further comprises adding a salt selected from the group consisting of LiBr, LiCl, LiI, LiBF<sub>4</sub>, LiClO<sub>4</sub>, and CeCl<sub>3</sub>.

16. (canceled)

17. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein R<sup>2</sup> is selected from the group consisting of -CH<sub>3</sub>, -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>, -CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>, -(CH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>3</sub>CH<sub>3</sub>, and -CH(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>.

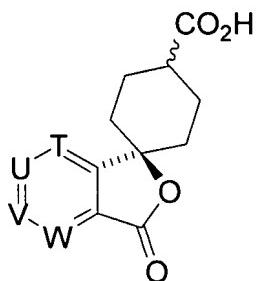
18. (canceled)

19. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein the acid of step (d) is selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, methane sulfonic acid, trifluoromethane sulfonic acid, and or a mixture thereof.

20. (canceled)

21. (original) The process of Claim 8 further comprising the steps of

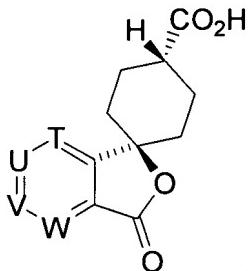
(f) adding an aprotic solvent to the compound of formula IC, or a salt thereof,



IC

to form a mixture; and

(g) aging the mixture of step (f) for a time and under conditions effective to afford the compound IA, or a salt thereof,



IA

22. (original) The process of Claim 21 wherein the aprotic solvent of step (f) is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, ethyl acetate, methyl *t*-butyl ether, toluene, or a mixture thereof.

23. (original) The process of Claim 21 wherein step (f) further comprises adding an acid to the mixture of step (f).

24. (original) The process of Claim 23, wherein the acid of step (f) is selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, hydrobromic acid, tartaric acid, methane sulfonic acid, toluene sulfonic acid, succinic acid, and sulfuric acid.

Claims 25-27 (canceled)

28. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein T, V and W are methine, wherein the methine group is unsubstituted or optionally substituted with a substituent selected from the group consisting of

- (a) halogen,
- (b) lower alkyl,
- (c) hydroxy, and
- (d) lower alkoxy; and

U is nitrogen.

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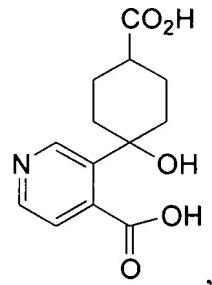
29. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein T, V and W are unsubstituted methine; and U is nitrogen.

30. (original) The process of Claim 8 wherein T, U, V and W are methine, wherein the methine group is unsubstituted or optionally substituted with a substituent selected from the group consisting of

- (a) halogen,
- (b) lower alkyl,
- (c) hydroxy, and
- (d) lower alkoxy.

Claims 31-58 (canceled)

59. (original) The compound of structural formula 1-3



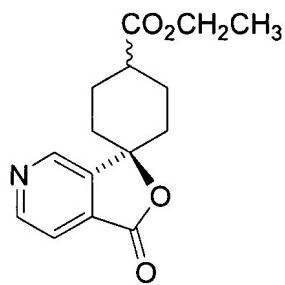
1-3

or a salt thereof.

Claims 60-61 (canceled)

62. (original) A compound of formula 2-3

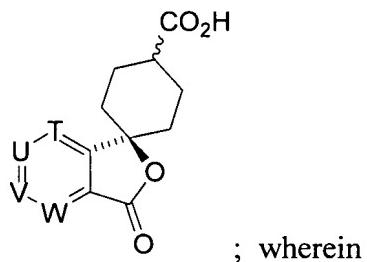
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2-3

or a salt thereof.

63. (original) A process for preparing a compound of formula IC, or a salt thereof,



IC

T, U, V and W are each independently selected from the group consisting of

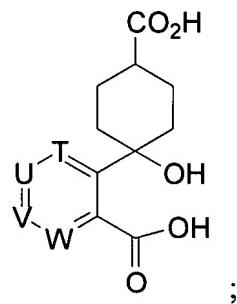
- (1) nitrogen, and  
 (2) methine,

wherein the methine group is unsubstituted or optionally substituted with a substituent selected from the group consisting of

- (a) halogen,
  - (b) lower alkyl,
  - (c) hydroxy, and
  - (d) lower alkoxy, and

wherein at least two of T, U, V, and W are methine;

comprising the step of adjusting the pH of a solution of compound C



C

in a solvent to a pH between about 0 and 4 with an acid to afford the compound IC, or a salt thereof.

64. (original) The process of Claim 63 wherein the solvent is selected from the group consisting of tetrahydrofuran, toluene, heptane, dimethoxyethane, benzene, and hexane, diethyl ether, xylene, water, or a mixture thereof.

65. (original) The process of Claim 63 wherein the acid is selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, methane sulfonic acid, trifluoromethane sulfonic acid, or a mixture thereof.

66. (original) The process of Claim 63 further comprising isolating the compound of formula IC, or a salt thereof.

Claims 67-72 (canceled)